

[John Maines, Jr.]

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Beliefs and Customs, - Occupational lore

Phipps Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 [119?]

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John Maines Jr., 72, born Dec. 10 1865, on his fathers farm, located 9 Mi. S. of Marlin, Falls Co., Tex. Following his parent's demise in 1881, Maines disposed of his property, formed a partnership with T.D, Reed, took 300 Geldings to San Angelo, Tex., where they established a ranch. They dissolved partnership in 1914 to allow Maines to establish a ranch in Coleman Co., Tex. Bankrupt in 1918, Maines went to Fort Worth, Texas, where he established himself as a cattle dealer on the Stock Yards. He married Marcy V. Kazy in 1884. They reared five children. One of them now demised, the remaining four residing in Fort Worth, and Maines residing on the Jackson Place 1 1/2 Mi. S.E. of Kennedale, Tex. His story:

“So you want to know about the cattle business, do you? Well, you've come to about the crustiest old man on the Yards. I've lived through the worst times, and the best times the Range has seen. First, I was born December 10th, 1865, and I'm 72 years old now. I was jerked up by the hair on my head, and raised on my father's farm, which was about nine miles from Marlin, in Falls county, Texas. My father was wealthy when folks could be-wealthy and well thought of at the same time. He had a big farm, I guess about 750 acres,

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about 500 head of hosses, and about 200 head of cows. I don't remember how much was pastured, but a big part of the land was in cultivation.

"I was put to work on the place soon's I was big enough to work. No certain work, just all the chores I could get around to between five in the morning and seven or eight at night, Oh, it wasn't a picnic but it gave me a good start and made a man out of me. You'll find very few men old as I am, that can get around like I can. Once in awhile, I get out and buy up two or three car loads of cattle to sell here on the Yards. [??] - 2/11/41 [?] Box 1 2 Sometimes, I buy for others but I'm always doing something and I have a reputation for knowing cattle but I got it by a lot of hard work.

"You see, my father died in 1881 when I was a 16 year old kid. I was the only kid, so I got everything. T.D. Reed, the Administrator for my father's estate, had worked for my father for 30 years. He settled all the bills, and handled everything I wanted to sell out and go to the West, as all kids did then, and now. We argued and argued but I kept on wanting to go, so we sold out, lock, stock, and barrel. I only kept 300 heed of Geldings.

"I bet you don't know what Geldings are. Geldings are the finest of hosses after they have been castrated. I still don't know why, but they are. Well, I went in partners with T.D. Reed, and we went west to Angelo. Some folks say, San Angelo but anyway, that's where we went. We settled about 14 miles west of town, and made a ranch, Reed actually ran the place because he was an older hand in the business, and then too, he could still lick me. I just strung along and worked like a straw boss.

"I'll never forget those days I spent in the saddle, riding the Range and 'tending the cattle. Let me tell you that those days wouldn't suit a lot of jellies I see every day now. Many's the night I slept sound as a rock out on the open plain, miles from a house, using my saddle as a pillow and layin' on my saddle blanket with my slicker covering me, and it a-pouring down rain. 3 "There's one time I'll never forget as long's I live because I nearly cashed my checks in. The surrounding ranchers had combined with T.D. Reed and me to hold

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a roundup in the Fall, and I was taking my spell at watching at about two in the morning. We were holding the herd we had rounded up, and intended to work the stock the next morning. When I say, 'Work I mean to separate and brand the different brands represented in the herd.

"You see, there were no fences then. You just leased so much land the same as the other ranchers around. Your cattle drifted together, and the roundup was necessary to divide the cattle belonging to the different ranchers. A rancher never dared to be absent at a roundup because some of the others might put their own brand on your cattle, then you would be minus. The brand T.D. Reed and me used was a heart on the left hip for the cattle, and a T triangle on the left hip for the hosses.

"Well, this night I was telling about, there was an electric storm going on, and a blinding flash struck on the other side of the herd from me. This scared the cattle, and they turned and ran away from the flash. Well, away from the flash put me right out in front. In any stampede, the cattle run right over any thing in their way that aint too big, Anything too big, they go around, but a cowboy on a hoss aint too big, so he has to ride hard and try to get out of their way. I was riding a good cowpony, and a good cowpony is surefooted in the day time. He is surerfooted than any other kind of 4 hoss, but at night, he can't see any better then a steer. Then too, there are lots of prairie dog and gopher holes in the prairie to stumble over. [At?] night, these holes can't be seen, so a ride in front of a stampeding herd aint much like a tea party on a lawn, especially at night.

"Well I struck out. I was riding for all I was worth, whipping my hoss every step of the way with my stetson. It seemed like to me, that we had rode about 20 miles before I heard several of them bawl. Man! Man! was I glad to hear that. You see, when they begin to bawl, they are ready to round and mill. I started the leaders to rounding, and pretty soon, they were all milling and quieted down. I didn't have to watch them anymore because they were too tired to run anymore, so I rested myself and the hoss. When daylight came, I discovered we hadn't come but two miles, and the other cowmen soon came up. They

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followed the trail, so werwere found pretty quick. The cattle were driven back, and branded the next morning. There was just one-thing about this whole stampede I hated. I whipped my hoss the first time he had ever been whipped. A good cowpony should never be whipped.

“We had trouble with rustlers pretty often but we didn't mind because half the stock we had was rustled from other cattlemen. This rustling business was pretty tough. A fellow had to be on the guard, day and night, A man's gun was more important than his pants, and a good hoss was next. [A?] man with a good gun, a good saddle, and a good cowhoss was sitting on top of the world in those days because with these things, he 5 could get anything else he was big enough, and man enough to take.

“Now, I'm not going to tell you the particulars about my part in the rustling and I don't really mean to brag, but you can believe me when I say I've threw a wet rope. I knew lots of rustlers in those days. If they treated me and Reed alright, we would help them when they needed us, but when they went wrong, or put us to too much trouble we always tried to make it too hot for them to stay in the country. Reed and I once paid a certain gang \$1500.00, or \$500.00 apiece to kill three men who were trying to run us out of business.

“I saw many a gun fight and was in several myself. I was never scratched by anybody, but if I ever killed a man, I wouldn't tell it. I'll just say that I loved a gun scrap, and would trade that life today for the one we live now. I carried the usual two colts 45's, and a Winchester Carbine with me everywhere I went. You just couldn't tell what might happen, nor when, so it was mighty good insurance to be heeled all the time. Now, I've told about this part of the life to show you another reason why the jollies of today wouldn't like the Old West.

“Reed and I worked together for 20 years. During this time, I met Marcy V. Kazy in Angleo and married her in 1884. I won't tell about our meeting and marrying because it is about the only real decent thing ever happened to me. Marcy is a real Western girl, and she has gone through lots with me. I quit Reed and rustling on account of her in 1914, and went to

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6 Coleman County, where I established a ranch of 3,000 acres along the Colorado River. This was the very best opportunity I ever had to really ammount to something in the cattle business, but I went bankrupt in 1918. I wouldn't have gone bankrupt but the bank I was doing business with in Coleman went bankrupt, and since I owed them \$7500,00 and had no money to back it up, I come out at the little end. I had around 1500 head of cattle in 1916, but reverses put me back to 500 head of white face Herefords In 1918. In other words, I owed the amount my cattle could bring, so the bank foreclosed and broke even on me. There were some others they didn't do so well by. Old Butch Gallagher owed them 63,000, and still owes it, I guess.

Well, after I was bankrupt, Marcy and me looked around, and thought a lot. There we were, broke, had four children, and one dead, so we up and moved to Fort Worth. It was a lucky move for me because I could go into the cattle Commission business here without any capital. I just got a bonding company put up my bond, and went to dealing on the stock Yards. I made enough money to put my kids through school, and now they're all married, got kids of their own, I won't live with them while I'm still able to make a living, but if I ever do have to, I've raised them to love their old man and they will welcome us to their homes. That's a lot to be thankful for.